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SUBJECT: EGYPTIAN FM ABOUL GHEIT ON DARFUR

Classified By: Ambassador Francis J. Ricciardone for reasons
1.4(b) and (d).

¶1. (C) In a meeting with Foreign Minister Ahmed Aboul Gheit on December 12, the Ambassador cited recent public comments by President Mubarak as indicating apparent support of Bashir's effective rejection of the Abuja and Addis agreements regarding deployment of UN Forces to Darfur. Aboul Gheit denied that this was Egypt's intent, and, on the contrary, pressed for more urgent U.S. action to implement the November 16 phased approach. He urged Special Envoy Natsios, together with UN and AU officials, to meet with Bashir and agree how to implement phases one and two of the plan and finalize decisions on phase three. There must be decisions "and ideas," he stressed, on key issues such as command of troops, designating a special representative to the UNSYG, and sourcing of peacekeeping troops. The parties need to find a formula to "satisfy President Bashir's requirements," for example, "by allowing for two emblems on a green beret for the AU forces and a blue beret for the UN logistics officers."

¶2. (C) On Egypt's role, Aboul Gheit said he is still waiting for the letter from the AU requesting Egypt increase its forces' participation. (Note: He had asked us to press the AU for such a letter last May, following the signing of the Darfur Peace Agreement. End note.) Aboul Gheit confirmed that Egypt is ready to increase its police and military forces in Darfur "when Sudan and the UN reach an agreement." Aboul Gheit said Egypt is working to play a more prominent role, according to AU and Sudanese desires, but the AU had offered Egypt only one slot for an officer in the new peacekeeping force. Aboul Gheit said that President Mubarak is considering making a one day visit to Sudan in the near future (NFI), and reiterated the need to expedite progress.
RICCIARDONE